



AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT
INTERIM STATEMENT- ACCIDENT

AAIID Ref No: ESW-AIG-ACCID-21-001



Figure 1: Bell 206L1, V5-HOC.

Description of Occurrence:

Occurrence Reference	: ESW-AIG-ACCID-21-001
Occurrence Category	: Accident
Name of the Operator	: Heliworx Aviation Services (Pty) Ltd, Namibia
Manufacturer	: Bell Helicopter - USA
Aircraft Model	: B206L1
Engine(s)	: Rolls Royce Corporation
Nationality	: Namibia
Registration	: V5-HOC
Type of Flight	: Ferry
State of Occurrence	: Eswatini
Place of Occurrence	: Near Mhlambanyatsi, Hhohho Region
Date and Time	: 26 October 2021, 0605Z
Total Crewmembers	: 1
Total Passengers	: 0
Injuries to Passengers and Crew	: 1 Fatality
Other Injuries	: None
Nature of Damage	: Destroyed

*(All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z).
Eswatini Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.)*

On Tuesday morning, 26 October 2021, a pilot being the sole occupant on board a Bell B206L1 helicopter (Figure 1) departed from Matsapha Airport (FDMS) in Eswatini under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) to Lanseria International Airport (FALA) in Gauteng, South Africa. According to the flight plan, the intended flight path was to route via DUKRA-EXOBI-ETGVA and then FALA.

According to available information, the pilot took off and broadcasted his intentions/flight detail on frequency 124.9 MHz and followed unmanned procedures to the FDMS control zone (CTR) boundary. Upon reaching the boundary he changed to traffic information broadcast by aircraft (TIBA) frequency 125.0 megahertz (MHz). The accident flight was a fourth attempt to make the flight over a period of 72 hours as three other attempts were abandoned prior to departure or a diversion back to the airport of departure due to weather inclination.

An eyewitness (positioned about one kilometre east from the accident site), stated that he saw the helicopter flying at the highest tree top level before descending out of sight beyond the hill crest into a narrow valley. Shortly thereafter a loud explosion sound was heard in the direction of flight of the helicopter which was followed by a black cloud of smoke rising over the ridge. The witness drove to the source of the black smoke and found the helicopter crashed and on fire. He then made a phone call to ask for assistance in the form of fire and emergency services as the fire was intense. Assistance arrived at 0625Z and extinguished the fire.

The pilot was fatally injured, and the helicopter was destroyed by impact and post-impact fire.

Purpose of the Investigation:

*This report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents and **not to apportion blame or liability.***

This Interim Statement gives a brief on the Investigation progress and should be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Report with reference number ESW-AIG-ACCID-21-001 that was published on 24 November 2021.

Later Interim Statements/Reports, or the Final Report, may contain altered information in case of new evidence becoming available during the ongoing investigation.

Investigations process:

The occurrence was categorised as an Accident and the Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AAIID) assigned an Accident Investigation File Number ESW-AIG-ACCID-21-001 for this investigation.

The state appointed the investigator-in-charge (IIC) to conduct the investigation in accordance with Annex 13 and the Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation) Regulations 2013. The AAIID is leading the Investigation and will issue a Final Report.

The AIID Reports are made publicly available at: www.eswacaa.co.sz

Interim Statement

This Interim statement gives a brief account of the progress of the Investigation into the subject Accident. This Interim Statement is released in accordance with Standard 6.6 of the International Civil Aviation Organisation *Annex 13*.

Since the release of the preliminary report on 24 November 2021, the investigating team is still in the process of determining and analysing the human performance factors and characteristics of the flight that could have contributed to this accident. In addition, the investigators have reviewed the maintenance records and serviceability of the aircraft, and the findings will be discussed in the final report.

The following findings have been established thus far:

- The pilot held a valid Commercial Pilot's Licence with Instructor level II rating and a valid flight medical certificate issued by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA).
- The operator had a valid Air Operator Certificate (AOC) issued by the Namibia Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), upon which the helicopter was listed and approved for aerial work, external load operations, and air ambulance operations.
- The helicopter's on board flight documentation was found to be valid.
- The Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA) issued an approval for the aircraft to operate in Eswatini based on the AOC issued by the NCAA and on the bases of the valid flight documentation.
- The helicopter was fitted with a Simplex Model 7900 crop spraying tank and booms (Figure 1).
- No evidence of inflight break-up was found, and the helicopter wreckage layout was consistent with tree contact before final impact. The wreckage was contained in one area as found at the accident site.
- No pre-impact anomalies were observed in the airframe, the main rotor system and/or the tail rotor system. Evidence from tree strikes indicated that the rotors were rotating under engine power during the impact sequence.
- The helicopter's flight controls were destroyed by the post impact fire and therefore, the flight control continuity could not be determined.
- The engine tear-down inspection revealed no pre-impact anomalies which would have precluded engine operation. The engine was deemed operational prior to impact.
- Aerodrome weather conditions at the time of departure were in conformance with VFR parameter. However, conditions deteriorated to IMC as the flight progressed.

No Safety Recommendation have been issued at this stage.

The investigation is ongoing. Any person who has information concerning this accident should contact the AAID on, aaid@eswacaa.co.za or +26823335555 / +26878705686.

This Report is issued by:

**Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Department – under the Authority of,
The Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Kingdom of Eswatini**